



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – March 6, 2009
Public Health Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Gina McCarthy
Department of Environment Protection

House Bill No. 6617 (RAISED) - AN ACT CONCERNING WATER SUPPLY PLANS

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding House Bill No. 6617 (RAISED) - AN ACT CONCERNING WATER SUPPLY PLANS. The Department of Environmental Protection opposes the part of Raised Bill No. 6617 which proposes to amend CGS Section 25-32d Section 1(a). The amendment proposes to restrict the Department's existing authority on water supply plan approval concurrence.

Coordination between all state agencies that are responsible for water supply related issues is critical now more than ever as resources become more limited. We have made great strides as a state over the last few years to make sure potable water needs are coordinated with other competing water uses and a sustainable environment. The Water Supply Plans are a great opportunity for the water suppliers to get feedback from both DPH and DEP as appropriate and removing the existing DEP role would be a step backwards.

We provide the additional information in support of maintaining the existing language.

Most of the Department's decisions to approve or not approve water supply plans are directly concerning our regulatory program permits, approvals or are related to water quality and quantity issues. However, a number of the Department's comments concern valuable planning advice and potential policy conflicts designed to avoid significant future permitting issues, environmental conflicts, known environmental problems, and provide better environmental and economic assessment of water supply alternatives.

Some of the Departments issues that are related but not necessarily direct department permits or approvals include: the adequacy of water conservation measures and other demand management methods, projected supply demands and land use, water quality conditions, safe yield determinations, waste load allocations, potential availability of water sources, future service areas, supply needs relative to existing contaminated areas, rare and endangered species, fisheries and aquatic habitat, land acquisition, and future land sales.

It is unclear to the Department to why such restriction is proposed. The Department routinely defers water supply issues unrelated to the Department to the other agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert La France, at 424-3401.